

**Remembering the Memorial
Council President Scott Peters, First District
For the La Jolla Light**

The Mount Soledad cross was given a welcome reprieve this summer. Facing a court-imposed August 2 deadline to remove the cross or pay a \$5000 a day fine, the city's appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. In a surprising and potentially sweeping ruling, Justice Anthony Kennedy granted a stay, meaning the cross could remain and the city would not be forced to pay the fine, until the case is heard by another appeals court this Fall. As someone would like to see the cross remain in place if the law allows, I was pleased by this development.

The U.S. Congress is also considering the fate of the Soledad cross this summer. The House of Representatives last month passed a bill to transfer ownership of the land under the cross from the city to the federal government. While the vote was overwhelmingly in favor of keeping the cross, its odds of success in the Senate are less predictable.

Unfortunately, I fear that this action by the congress will further complicate an already complicated and heavily-litigated issue. Public land is public land, and if the court decides that a religious symbol cannot be displayed there, it will not matter who owns the land. If the land is transferred and the cross is later ruled illegal, it makes resolution more difficult.

I hope that we will have a final answer from the courts on the fate of the cross within the next year. The City has committed to appealing this case as far as we are able. If the U.S. Supreme Court decides to take up the case, we could have that answer by next Spring. No matter how the court rules, I hope all San Diegans will respect the work of our legal system and abide by the court's decision.

Whether or not the cross is allowed to stay, the Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial will remain. The large American flag and six concentric plaque-covered walls bear witness to the sacrifices made by generations of Americans in the name of freedom. They will continue to be cared for by the non-profit Mount Soledad Memorial Association.

You should know that the uncertainty over the cross has interfered with financial support for the memorial. Plaque sales and memberships are down. I hope you will support the work of the Mount Soledad Memorial Association with your membership, volunteer time and plaque purchases. My family recently bought a plaque for my father-in-law, who served in the Navy in World War II. He was honored and touched.

The Memorial Association has worked very hard to create something worthy of our respect and support. For more information on the memorial and the Memorial Association, and for information on how to buy a plaque for your favorite veteran, you can visit their website, <http://www.soledadmemorial.com>.